It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in particular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually used.

But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one resorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden mallet, gosilanda is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars.

In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares, the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

778 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years
211 "renewal" (1).

1. See pp. ff.

III. The Religious Societies

794 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called fla; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term dyo (2) meaning

476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, dyo, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, tô, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the tô whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the tô in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture (in press).

794 "to build, to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.